

Junior Cricket at Mytholmroyd CC

By Russell Eggar

Mytholmroyd Cricket Club, set in the heart of the scenic Calder Valley, is a club steeped in history. Cricket has been played at their home ground Ewood Holmes on Moderna Way for over a hundred years.

The club's most successful years to date were the early 1950s when the club won the cup on three occasions but 1955 proved to be a year of disaster with 'Royd' getting relegated. Ever since, the club has struggled to regain its status as one of the best clubs in the area.



It wasn't until the early 1990s that things started to change and, after a 40-year wait filled with frustration and little to shout about, there were a few people who were determined to pull the club out of its dire position.

The club had no real pavilion, just an old battery hen hut to change in but, most shockingly, the club was not looking after its future interests and had no real junior section. After a few of the club's figureheads formed a committee in 1990, it was decided that after the new lottery-funded pavilion was set in place they would initiate some junior teams at Mytholmroyd CC.

At the time, the clubs around the area had generally poor facilities and Royd was no exception, but clubs were taking the initiative to form junior teams

So Mytholmroyd soon followed suit.

Recruiting children from around the village, Mytholmroyd managed to form a team that won the coveted Collinson Cup.

By 1995 it was clear that there was a lot of talent in and around Mytholmroyd and the team soon became two teams: the Under-15s and Under-17s.

In order to recruit new talent and maintain the high standard of cricket, Paul Watson approached Calder High School to try and create interest by announcing the establishment of the two junior sides. It seems that clubs like Mytholmroyd were taking advantage of the school's reluctance to teach cricket.

After this the children started to become more passionate about cricket and up until the year 2000, the junior sides started to take care of themselves.

In 2001 a new pavilion was built at Mytholmroyd's home ground on Moderna Way and provided the opportunity for the club to attract new players. By the end of 2002 the club had two well-established junior teams with a certified coach and a lot of prospects.

Having said this, it is evident that Royd are not one of the biggest clubs in the league and it is difficult for coaching sessions to occur regularly, but the club is run in such a positive way that the juniors frequently find themselves training alongside the senior teams, which helps the juniors to learn and the seniors to assess the progress of their young stars. These young stars then have the opportunity to step into the senior teams.

It is feasible to suggest that the club's mix between senior and junior cricketers has been a major reason why the club has achieved so much in the last few years. However, it isn't an easy transition from youth to adult cricket especially with the distractions of teenage life.

The fact still remains, though, that cricket is a valuable pastime and teaches young men (and women) some important life lessons while also keeping them off the streets, out of trouble and frequently exercising. The folk at Mytholmroyd are eager to promote the benefits of youth cricket...especially at their club.

Mytholmroyd CC is very proud of the achievements of their junior sides and the people there will continue to support and maintain the development of young cricketers with talent. The club are looking to extend the junior section to four teams by adding Under-11 and Under-13 teams. So the future undoubtedly holds a lot of promise for Mytholmroyd CC.